STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

1996 No. 452

CHILDREN

The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996

Made - - - -	*25th September 1996*
Coming into operation	*4th November 1996*

The Department of Health and Social Services, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Articles 108(2) and 112(1) and (2) of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995(**1**) and of all other powers enabling it in that behalf, hereby makes the following Regulations:

Citation, commencement and interpretation

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 and shall come into operation on 4th November 1996.

(2) In these Regulations—

"the Order" means the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;

"address" includes a temporary address; and

"appropriate authority" has the meaning assigned to it by Article 111(6) of the Order.

General welfare of children

2.—(1) In carrying out functions under Article 108 of the Order, as to the welfare of children who are privately fostered within its area, an authority (including any officer of the authority making a visit under regulation 3) shall satisfy itself as to such of the matters specified in paragraph (2) as are relevant in the particular circumstances.

(2) The matters referred to in paragraph (1) are—

(a) the purpose and intended duration of the fostering arrangement;

(b) the child's physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development;

(c) whether the child's needs arising from his religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background are being met;

(d) the financial arrangements for the care and maintenance of the child;

(**1**) S.I.1995/755 (N.I. 2)

(e) the suitability of the accommodation;

(f) the arrangements for the child's medical and dental care and treatment and, in particular, that the child is included on the list of a general medical practitioner who provides general medical services under Part VI of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972(**2**);

(g) the arrangements for the child's education and, in particular, that the education and library board within whose area the foster parent lives has been informed of the fostering arrangement;

(h) the standard of care which the child is being given;

(i) the suitability of the foster parent to look after the child and the suitability of the foster parent's household;

(j) whether the foster parent is being given any necessary advice;

(k) whether the contact between the child and his parents, or any other person with whom contact has been arranged, is satisfactory;

(l) whether the child's parents, or any other person, are exercising parental responsibility for the child; and

(m) the ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child regarding the fostering arrangements.

Visits to children

3.—(1) An authority shall make arrangements for each child who is privately fostered within its area to be visited by an officer of the authority as the authority considers necessary in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child and when reasonably requested by the child or foster parent and in particular—

(a) in the first year of the fostering arrangement, within one week from its beginning and then at intervals of not more than 6 weeks;

(b) in any second or subsequent year, at intervals of not more than 3 months where the authority considers the placement to be satisfactory.

(2) For the purposes of making visits under this regulation the officer shall, if he considers it appropriate, arrange to see the child alone.

(3) The officer shall make a written report to the authority after each visit.

Notifications by prospective and actual foster parents

4.—(1) Any person who proposes to foster privately a child for whom he is not already caring and providing accommodation shall notify the appropriate authority not less than 6, nor more than 13, weeks before he receives the child, unless he receives him in an emergency.

(2) A person who is privately fostering a child—

(a) whom he received in an emergency; or

(b) for whom he was already caring and providing accommodation when he became a foster child,

shall notify the appropriate authority not more than 48 hours after the fostering arrangement began.

(3) A notice under paragraph (1) or (2) shall specify—

(a) the name, sex, date and place of birth, religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background of the child;

(**2**) S.I. 1972/1265 (N.I. 14)